

32-16 88 Street
New York City, N. Y. 11369
March 20, 1975

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Rte. 7
Frederick, Md. 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you very much for your reply to my letter in which I told you about reading what I believed to be a death threat against the late President Kennedy and then Vice-President Johnson in a Dallas newspaper prior to the assassination of JFK. I think you can understand my reluctance to be quoted, or even to communicate with you further, because I had already suffered grievous consequences as a result of my letter to the Warren Commission from Dallas in March 1964.

Since there are rumors of others coming forward with this info, I am much relieved to feel the truth may be known. I recognize that you have been continually involved in seeking the truth, especially when you tried to have access to the additional Warren Commission files.

Personally, I wished to be involved in efforts in Dallas to counteract the extreme rightward bias of the local media at around the time I noticed the first letter. I continued the same kind of activities following the JFK assassination. Anyway, I must have overdid it because the local media attacked a group that I was involved in forming to oppose the existing school board of Dallas. My husband believed that I was cracking up and was tricked into committing me to RParkland Hospital. He was a Professor at the Medical School there. Anyway, Parkland was a set-up. I recognized a girl who had been in some of my classes at North Texas State U., who was supposedly one of the other patients. I was stuck.

If I petitioned for my release, I had to have a jury trial and my part in the political organization would be gone over (to its discredit). Since I knew my husband would oppose my release on the grounds that any of my claims were symptomatic, all I would accomplish would be to get committed by the court for a certain six months. They treated me very badly. But they hadn't killed me and they hadn't done a lobotomy. I began to get the impression that I was as much of an albatross to the psychiatrist that had charge of me, as he was to me. I was very stubborn all along insisting on my rights. I did sketches of the other inmates that I did not believe were mentally ill and they were very good sketches. The psychiatrist said everyone would lie, but I insisted everyone couldn't lie that well and together.

I'm probably not much like the other people who have been helping you. Because while I want the truth to be known about the Kennedy assassination, something I wanted even more than that was to change things in Dallas. Of course, I have suffered so much as a consequence of what I tried to do. It is not just being afraid of what might happen to me, although that too. It is terror at what had already been done to me. There is nobody alive that would want to undergo that twice. It was very much like the Ministry of Love in Orwell's book 1984. The outcome was the same, except that I was married. The proceedings put such a chasm between myself and my husband that is not to be believed. We each had our own psychiatrist, you see. I held myself together through it all as well as I could, with the expectation that they would have to release me when he was no longer able to pay for my "treatment". But when I got out, he was free-associating all the time with me. Conversation was absurd. I really hated him for betraying me, although I knew we had a long and severely tested relationship. My memory of that fact, plus my hopes of eventually getting legal assistance made me try to stick it out in Dallas.

It was impossible. Evidently, he had been coached on watching for the least misbehavior on my part, to threaten to lock me up in Terrell State Hospital (free). I had been warned by the psychiatrist in charge of me that if I was to go to N.Y.C. (my hometown) and be hospitalized there, I would be shipped to a mental institution in Texas. On the final threat of incarceration in Terrell, I explained for NY for a 'vacation'.

I was divorced from Dallas. I took many chances in New York to try to get my story out in the open, to get my husband out of Dallas because I was afraid for his safety. I went to the NY TIMES, to Bellvue, to a private psychiatrist, to lawyers, Legal Aid, the ACLU. I got a lawyer through an Ethical church here in NY, finally. He defended the divorce, but the other part of my case was hopeless. I didn't have the money to pay for it. I wanted to do it as a civil rights thing because I was a polltax deputy when I was incarcerated. A voting rights violation and getting my husband out of Texas first. Not even the ACLU was defending people who just came out of mental institutions then.

I had many friends in Dallas. Some were really very nice to their injured 'pal'; but such people were precious to me. I could think of no way that I should want to place their lives in jeopardy, to share my fate. Certainly, if I could not think of a strategic plan, how could I endanger them? One morning in the hospital, I wept bitterly because I woke up alive.

Mr. H. Weisberg

The amount of my family's community property remaining from the sale of our house, etc., etc. was precisely to the dollar the amount my husband had paid the two psychiatrists. I remember thinking at the time that it was nifty because that way they couldn't be said to have kidnapped me for payment. My husband never would tell me who recommended the lawyer for him, nor who was in court as his witness. He tells me what he really believes, usually, but in this he does not. He really thinks I am an unfortunate.

Anyway, I've had different jobs and work to help support my son. Sometimes I write letters to public figures on issues I consider important, including finding out the truth about the Kennedy assassination. I spent a lot of time upset and thinking about all this de neve, which is making for a fragmented effort and ineffectual in results. Therefore, I am writing you an explanation of why my first letter did not spell out why I was so afraid in this connection.

I am encouraged by simply having established a contact with the Civil Liberties groups here and am sending them a copy of my correspondence. This way, if I am making an effort that costs me so much pain...at least it is not for nothing in case anything happens to me. I carry my letters over there. When I wrote the Warren letter, I supposed there was a good chance that I might be killed; but I did it anyway because I wanted to change things. I still do. As my letter said, I had noticed another letter in the other Dallas paper which did not threaten Kennedy but contained the same sort of propaganda as the first one. This made me think that the FBI knew about Oswald. They were checking him around October '63 when that letter appeared. I guessed he wrote other stuff, or some related group did so. I didn't read all the papers, but I supposed he might have sent the same one around different places. I keep saying Oswald, but without the proof, who knows who wrote these letters? It must be that they were not revealed because something was wrong to show that Oswald was not the writer. You do have a copy of my letter of 2/20/68, don't you? If not, I can send you mine.

Please write as soon as possible. So many have had political axes grinding in the Kennedy assassination, I think. I don't want anyone twisting what I have to say until I don't recognize it. You understand that, I expect.

Yours truly,

Lorraine Brake

Lorraine Brake

cc: ACLU/NYCLU